

## Frequently asked questions

### Reporting abuse

#### General questions

##### How do I protect privacy?

An individual's privacy can be protected by ensuring that any statements (written and oral) obtained are shared only with those who have a legitimate or legal reason to hold that knowledge in order to progress investigations.

##### Should I keep notes if I'm suspicious?

If something concerns you and you suspect improper conduct, it is important that you keep notes and speak with your minister or appointed church leader about those concerns. This person will help you to determine what to do next. Keep notes in the ***complaints and allegations statement template*** for recording and reporting.

##### Who do I report to?

If you are a member of a congregation, parent, leader or helper in children's activities, you should report your concerns to the minister. If the concern is about the minister, you should report to the **Church Safety Consultant** at the Kenmore Campus email: [bonnie.seip@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:bonnie.seip@cofcqld.com.au) ph: 33271677 or the **Church Assist hotline** on 1800 193 438.

##### What if something is not reportable, but I'm still concerned about it?

It is important that you make the church aware of anything you feel is important for them to know.

##### What should I do if I have a concern about the behaviour of my minister?

If you have a concern about your minister, you should discuss it with the Church Safety Consultant.

##### What will happen when I report to the minister or Church Safety Consultant?

Churches of Christ in Qld ministers are ethically obliged to report alleged criminal offences to the police. In some cases the police will want a statement from you. Your minister will offer pastoral support to you in such circumstances. That is, unless your concern is in relation to your minister, in which case the Church Safety Consultant will offer pastoral support to you.

##### Can I report directly to the police/Child Protection Investigation Unit if I want to?

All members of the public have a right to report any concerns of alleged criminal activity directly to the police and/or other statutory authorities. Should you decide to report your concerns directly to the police we simply ask that you notify the church so that the church can activate any necessary procedures required to ensure the safety of all involved until such time as the police have completed their investigation.

##### Why does the church want to know about these matters?

By reporting matters of concern to the church, you are enabling the church to ensure that the appropriate authorities are notified and that measures are put in place to address any further risk to the safety of children.

#### Questions relevant to ministers

##### What if something is not reportable, but I'm still concerned about it?

Speak with someone you know and trust (mentor/professional supervisor or Church Safety Consultant) in order to determine whether you should raise your concerns with the church.

You should also report important information to **Crime Stoppers** on 1800 333 000.

### **Is there a list of important phone numbers for reporting these matters?**

A list at the end of this document includes details of statutory authorities (police and Department of Child Safety) and support services in your region. *Ensure that your local, relevant phone numbers are displayed prominently and distributed.*

### **Do I need permission from parents to report my concerns to the Department of Child Safety or CPIU?**

No, permission from the child or family to release information is not required. In cases where the parent or guardian is suspected of being the abuser, it is important to follow the instructions of police officers before speaking to the family. In most cases, subject to police or CPIU advice, a courtesy communication with the parent or guardian is warranted, informing them about what has happened and offering them support.

### **Do I need permission from parents to make a referral for support?**

Yes. If a referral to a family support service is recommended, then consent from the family is required before making these referrals.

### **What support options are there for survivors or families who may need extra assistance?**

There are many support options available for survivors of abuse and harm. If the survivor or family require some assistance and counselling, the referral points such as Family and Child Connect (FCC) is a central referral point to link families and children to appropriate support services. <http://familychildconnect.org.au/> or phone: **13 FAMILY (13 32 64)**

## **HELPFUL CONTACTS, REFERRALS and LINKS**

If you or a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation **call Triple Zero (000)**.

Call **Lifeline** 13 11 14 for 24-hour support and suicide prevention.

If you have a reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm or being neglected, contact **Child Safety Services** and talk to someone about your concerns:

During normal business hours - contact the **Regional Intake Service**.

After hours and on weekends - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999. The service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Do you need local services?** Visit [www.oneplace.org.au](http://www.oneplace.org.au) to find support in your local area.

#### **Parenting support**

**Parentline** – provides confidential counselling for parents. Phone Parentline on 1300 301 300, from 8am-10pm, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call.

**Family and Child Connect** – is a free service to help you with the challenges of parenting.

**Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council** – lists local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services families can access throughout Queensland. Services include health care, child wellbeing, parenting support, mums and bubs programs and more.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples information** – information about education and training, employment and business, family and social support, having your say and other useful info.

**The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)** – provides parents with practical information and support to deal with and prevent common emotional and behavioural problems in children.